

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 46

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 177

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 46—Relative to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 7, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 46, Bonta. Unemployment: Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act.

This measure would request that the United States Congress modify the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act state allotment formula to include unemployment rates by race and ethnicity.

WHEREAS, The Legislature acknowledges that California's economy has significantly improved since the Great Recession, with unemployment rates down to 5.4 percent in March 2016, according to the Employment Development Department. California has added 2,134,400 jobs since the recovery began in February 2010; and

WHEREAS, The Legislative Analyst's Office notes that while unemployment rates are improving, California still has the second highest unemployment rate in the United States, an indicator of the depth of job loss experienced during the great recession and the size of California's economy; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor, in coordination with the United States Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services, is working diligently to ensure that states, local areas, other grantees, and stakeholders are prepared for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), signed by President Obama on July 22, 2014; and

WHEREAS, The Public Policy Institute of California also found that while jobs have been growing for five continuous years, 45 percent of Californians believed economic bad times were likely in 2015, while only 44 percent predicted good times; and

WHEREAS, Pew Charitable Trusts found that California ranked among the bottom 10 states in bringing people 25 through 54 years of age back to employment. In 2014, 73.6 percent of California's prime working population had jobs compared with 77.9 percent in 2007; and

WHEREAS, California's economy generates jobs at a rate similar to the national rate, but it is not enough to keep up with the state's fast-growing population; and

WHEREAS, California has also had an uneven economic recovery, with the coastal regions rebounding with more economic vigor relative to inland

areas of the state. However, employment disparities continue to persist at a city level even in counties that have high rates of economic and job growth; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco bay area as a region is closest to closing the employment gap since 2007, while county averages continue to hide persistent unemployment among certain populations. In Alameda County, where unemployment dropped to 4.3 percent in March 2016, African–American and Latino unemployment in the City of Oakland is still high at 18 percent and 16 percent, respectively; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature recommends that the United States Congress implement a racial equity lens when structuring workforce investment proposal requirements under the WIOA to ensure that unemployment rates are analyzed from multiple perspectives and not only average unemployment rates; and

WHEREAS, For every dollar of wealth a median Caucasian household has, a median Asian household has about 81 cents, a median Hispanic family has 7 cents, and a median African–American family has 6 cents. The disparity in employment exists not just by region in California, but also by race; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature requests that the United States Congress modify the WIOA state allotment formula to include unemployment rates by race and ethnicity. In making this change, no community in California shall receive less funds under WIOA. This change is intended to better reflect the employment conditions in states with high levels of income inequality and bring more funding to address the real workforce needs of the population; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.